



PRESS RELEASE

Internal Revenue Service - Criminal Investigation
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Two Indicted in Tax Conspiracy Involving Stolen Identities

Sioux Falls, South Dakota — This week in federal court, Brandon L. Russell and Allison C. Smith, both of Wichita, Kansas made their initial appearances before Federal Magistrate Judge Veronica L. Duffy after being indicted on March 4, 2015. On March 11, 2015, Russell and Smith were arrested in Kansas on charges of conspiracy to defraud the United States and aggravated identity theft.

According to court documents, Russell and Smith conspired to prepare and file false individual income tax returns in order to obtain fraudulent income tax refunds. Russell was also charged with aggravated identity theft. In particular, they stole the identities of other persons, including their names, dates of birth, and social security numbers and would use that information to file fraudulent income tax returns which claimed false income tax refunds. The scheme operated from August 2011 continuing until May 2012.

“Stealing identities and filing false tax returns is a serious crime that hurts innocent taxpayers,” stated Special Agent in Charge Shea Jones of the IRS Criminal Investigation St. Paul Field Office. “IRS Criminal Investigation will continue to vigorously pursue those who unjustly enrich themselves by preparing false claims for refunds.”

Russell and Smith face a potential maximum penalty of 10 years in federal prison and/or a \$250,000 fine plus restitution on the conspiracy charge. Russell also faces a

mandatory 2-year prison sentence on the aggravated identity theft charge. This case is the result of an investigation by the IRS-Criminal Investigation. It is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney John Haak.

Identity theft presents a challenge to businesses, organizations and governments. Tax-related identity theft remains a top priority for the IRS in 2015.

Anyone who has been a victim of identity fraud is encouraged to go to <http://www.irs.gov/uac/Taxpayer-Guide-to-Identity-Theft>.

For more information, see the special [identity theft section on IRS.gov](#) and IRS [Fact Sheet 2015-2](#), Identity Theft Information for Taxpayers and Victims.